

# Workplace **Bullying**:

**Bullying** is continued unacceptable actions that destabilises your right to self-esteem at work. It can be done by one or more employees and it is aimed at an particular person or a crowd to make them experience inferior to other many people. Bullying can be spoken bullying that could 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the company, forcible bullying or cyber bullying which is conveyed out on the web or portable telephones, with public networking websites, email message and texts. **Bullying** always engages reiterated incidents or a structure of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, be rude to, degrade or embarrass a selected person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggressiveness.

Workplace **Bullying** is repeated inappropriate methods, direct or secondary, either verbal, physical .

- commonly, executed by single or more workers against another or others, at the point of work and even in
- the procedure of employment, which could reasonably be viewed as undermining the an individual right

## Are you being bullied at employment? Or harassed?

When **bullying** is a form of hostility, the actions can be equally noticeable and insidious. It is crucial to be aware of that the implementing is not a step-by-step, nor do it bring up all forms of bullying. This particular list is provided as a form of demonstrating one of the ways bullying may perhaps happen in a job. In addition consider that bullying is usually deemed to be a structure of behaviour in which one or more problems will help show that bullying is developing.

### Examples include:

- spreading out malevolent rumours, gossip, or out and out lies that are false.
- leaving out or separating anyone socially.
- frightening a individual.
- devaluing or purposefully impeding a person's work.
- Physically abusing or unhealthy mistreatment.
- The removal of areas of obligations lacking cause.
- Frequently Shifting work guidelines.
- organising difficult work deadlines that may setup the individual to fail.
- Keeping Appropriate Important information or purposefully issuing the incorrect advise.
- Creating Jests that are 'demonstrably offensive' by voiced word or electronic mail.
- encroaching on a partner's privacy by pestering, watching or stalking.
- Screaming or using profanity.
- Criticizing a person continuously or repeatedly.
- Belittling a person's opinions.
- Unwarranted or unfound treatment.
- Embarrassing applications for training, leave or promotion.
- Messing around with a someone's personal valuables or work equipment.

**Bullying** and torment tend to be the acts of weak people. But can be out right hurtful when you are an unfortunate target. And when you are an manager in whose company this is allowed to take

place. **Bullying**, harassment, and sexual torment incidents by personnel against organizations can be amazingly damaging affairs. If you are an employee and are struggling from being bullied or bothered it can be equally costly for you in terms of your well being. In the event that you are being at in employment there can be a wide range of legal options open to you and you don't have to be affected in silence. Sexual harassment in the workplace in Ireland. Although there is no specific legal legal obligation on employers to have guidelines safeguarding **bullying**, torment, and sexual harassment it is seriously advisable.

**Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the Employment Equality Acts, together with the common law, create indirect obligations which amount to pretty much the same thing.**

### **Dignity at Work Policy**

One of the most efficient ways for employers to attend to the obligations imposed by the three statutory codes of practice above is to have (and implement) a dignity at work policy which would address **bullying**, harassment, and sexual harassment.

It is important to note that this dignity at work policy needs to be adapted to the particular circumstances of the workplace. For example if there is a safety representative or committee in place he/she will have to be consulted.

It must also be effectively communicated to employees and implemented in the workplace with regular reviews to take cognisance of any changes in legislation or codes of practice. And it must be brought to the attention of those in the workplace who have responsibility for implementing it and appropriate training should be provided.

### **Is *bullying* a workplace issue?**

Yes, **bullying** is a workplace issue. However, it is sometimes hard to know if **bullying** is happening at the workplace. Many studies acknowledge that there is a "fine line" between strong management and bullying. Comments that are objective and are intended to provide constructive feedback are not usually considered bullying, but rather are intended to assist the employee with their work.

If you are not sure an action or statement could be considered **bullying**, you can use the "reasonable person" test. Would most people consider the action unacceptable?

### **How can *bullying* affect an individual?**

**People who are the targets of *bullying* may experience a range of effects. These reactions include:**

- Shock.
- Anger.
- Feelings of frustration and/or helplessness.
- Increased sense of vulnerability.
- Loss of confidence.
- Physical symptoms such as:
  - Inability to sleep.
  - Loss of appetite.
- Psychosomatic symptoms such as:
  - Stomach pains.

- Headaches.
- Panic or anxiety, especially about going to work.
- Family tension and stress.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Low morale and productivity.

## How can **bullying** affect the workplace?

**Bullying** affects the overall “health” of an organization. An “unhealthy” workplace can have many effects. In general these include:

- Increased absenteeism.
- Increased turnover.
- Increased stress.
- Increased costs for employee assistance programs (EAPs), recruitment, etc.
- Increased risk for accidents / incidents.
- Decreased productivity and motivation.
- Decreased morale.
- Reduced corporate image and customer confidence.
- Poor customer service.

## What can you do if you think you are being bullied?

If you feel that you are being bullied, discriminated against, victimized or subjected to any form of harassment:

### *Do's*

- FIRMLY tell the person that his or her behaviour is not acceptable and ask them to stop. You can ask a supervisor or union member to be with you when you approach the person.
- KEEP a factual journal or diary of daily events. Record:
  - The date, time and what happened in as much detail as possible.
  - The names of witnesses.
  - The outcome of the event.
- Remember, it is not just the character of the incidents, but the number, frequency, and especially the pattern that can reveal the **bullying** or harassment.
- KEEP copies of any letters, memos, e-mails, faxes, etc., received from the person.
- REPORT the harassment to the person identified in your workplace policy, your supervisor, or a delegated manager. If your concerns are minimized, proceed to the next level of management.

### *Don'ts*

DO NOT RETALIATE. You may end up looking like the perpetrator and will most certainly cause confusion for those responsible for evaluating and responding to the situation.

(Adapted from: Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide. CCOHS)

## What can an employer do?

The most important component of any workplace prevention program is management commitment. Management commitment is best communicated in a written policy. Since **bullying** is a form of

violence in the workplace, employers may wish to write a comprehensive policy that covers a range of incidents (from bullying and harassment to physical violence).

***A workplace violence prevention program must:***

Be developed by management and employee representatives.

Apply to management, employee's, clients, independent contractors and anyone who has a relationship with your company.

Define what you mean by workplace **bullying** (or harassment or violence) in precise, concrete language.

Provide clear examples of unacceptable behaviour and working conditions.

State in clear terms your organization's view toward workplace **bullying** and its commitment to the prevention of workplace **bullying**.

Precisely state the consequences of making threats or committing acts.

Outline the process by which preventive measures will be developed.

Encourage reporting of all incidents of **bullying** or other forms of workplace violence.

Outline the confidential process by which employees can report incidents and to whom.

Assure no reprisals will be made against reporting employees.

Outline the procedures for investigating and resolving complaints.

Describe how information about potential risks of **bullying** violence will be communicated to employees.

Make a commitment to provide support services to victims.

Offer a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to allow employees with personal problems to seek help.

Make a commitment to fulfil the prevention training needs of different levels of personnel within the organization.

Make a commitment to monitor and regularly review the policy.

**What are some general tips for the workplace?**

**Do's:**

- ENCOURAGE everyone at the workplace to act towards others in a respectful and professional manner.
  - HAVE a workplace policy in place that includes a reporting system.
  - EDUCATE everyone that **bullying** is a serious matter.
  - TRY TO WORK OUT solutions before the situation gets serious or "out of control".
  - EDUCATE everyone about what is considered **bullying**, and whom they can go to for help.
  - TREAT all complaints seriously, and deal with complaints promptly and confidentially.
  - TRAIN supervisors and managers in how to deal with complaints and potential situations.
- Encourage them to address situations promptly whether or not a formal complaint has been filed.
- HAVE an impartial third party help with the resolution, if necessary.

**Don'ts:**

- DO NOT IGNORE any potential problems.
- DO NOT DELAY resolution. Act as soon as possible.
- Social exclusion and isolation
- Damaging someone's reputation by gossip or rumours
- Intimidation

- Aggressive or obscene language
- Repeated requests with impossible tasks or targets

Find out more [irishpsychotherapy.ie](http://irishpsychotherapy.ie)